

Technical Analysis System

Review by John Premack Boston Computer Society

Ed. Note: We thought with the recent stock market activity, this article belonged on the front page! See if you agree.

Either I'm getting easier to please or software for the Commodore just keeps getting better. I suspect it's the latter. Having just spent several hours with TAS-128, a Technical Analysis System from Abacus Software which performs stock market evaluations using the C-128, I am suitably in awe of the number of ways this program can monitor the behavior of stocks and other securities.

As a longtime advocate of the dartboard technique for stock selection, I discovered that I had a lot to learn about technical analysis methods. Simply stated, technical analysis is a means of confirming or denying your best guesses of a stock's future performance based on a study of its price and sales history.

TAS-128 can track as many as 50 securities on a single data disk, holding up to 275 periods of price and volume data for each security. You can edit or update the data by typing information in from the keyboard, or TAS will perform this chore for you by logging onto a commercial database with its built-in terminal program. Configured to automatically download quotes from either Warner Computer or Dow Jones News/ Retrieval Service, TAS can update either your entire portfolio or just designated issues.

Once you've collected data covering a stock's performance over a period of time, you're ready to let the program perform some of its tricks. TAS-128 will plot up- and down-trends via point and figure analysis. It will also chart moving averages, trading

bands, and volume indicators. An oscillator function allows the program to calculate momentum, advance/decline, and TRIN indicators. In addition, you can utilize as many as five different volume indicators: negative, positive, on-balance, price volume trend, and daily volume.

Novice analysts will be grateful for the series of menus which guide you through each step of the various analysis options. Once you know what you want to accomplish, it is faster to skip the menu by entering two-letter commands. These commands can even be combined for rapid entry or stored as macros that will perform a series of predetermined functions automatically.

All plots are first drawn to the computer's 80-column screen and can be dumped to your printer in your choice of three sizes. Since hardcopy commands can be incorporated into customized macros, TAS-128 can calculate, plot, and print several different charts without constant operator intervention. This is a handy feature since it allows the computer to generate a set of data while you go about your business.

The instructions indicate that the program supports Epson compatibles as well as the Mannesmann Tally Sprite 80 and Olivetti PR 2300 printers. Early Commodore printers which cannot handle 640- and 200-line graphics will not work with this program. I encountered a few minor problems printing to a Star Gemini 10x using a Cardco G-Whiz interface. After printing an excellent rendition of the four graphs currently on screen, I called for a printout of the data used in calculating the graphs. The printer driver apparently failed to initialize the printer, and the result was text printed

with the same compressed vertical spacing as was required by the previous printout, a graphic screen dump. This problem can be avoided by turning the printer off and back on between printouts, but should have been handled by the software. I also discovered, as I watched my printer spew forth text at 10 lines to the inch, that there was no apparent way to abort a printout. Shutting off the printer also stopped the program dead in its tracks.

I did encounter one serious problem, which fortunately occurred only once. For some reason, possibly when I was playing with the Communications

module, I lost all the sample records which were supplied on the tutorial data disk. Despite my best efforts, I was unable to duplicate the error, and I mention the incident only to point out the importance of backing up all data disks.

All in all, I found TAS-128 to be well-documented and easy to use, despite my lack of familiarity with the ins and outs of technical analysis. Small details, such as the automatic conversion to decimals of numbers entered as fractions, an easy-to-follow tutorial, and the nicely written manual seem indicative of a well-crafted program.

REVIEW OF MAGAZINE DISKS

Lloyd F. Warren, Fresno, CA

This review will deal with four different magazines' disks: 1.RUN, 2.COMPUTE!, 3.COMPUTE!'s GAZETTE, 4.COMMODORE (and just a word about AHOY!)

1. RE-RUN DISK

RUN magazine's entry, called RE-RUN, is made up of all the programs printed in two consecutive months magazines and is produced bi-monthly. About the only good things I can say about it is that they DO reproduce all the programs specially selected for the disk, and I have never found any errors in any of the programs that I have tried. One of the main faults of RE-RUN is that it is bi-monthly, meaning that a subscriber only receives 6 issues a year. The drawback to this is that if you find a program you want to use in number 1 issue you may have to wait until number 2 issue is printed before the disk is mailed out. There is a lot of unused space on any one of the RE-RUN disks. I checked 12 issue of the disk - 2 years worth - and found that on average, only 1/2 of the available 664 blocks were used. My conclusion - your \$89.97 for 1 year subscription (6 disks) can be better spent.

2. COMPUTE! DISK

COMPUTE! magazine's disk entry is simply called COMPUTE!. It is produced less frequently than RUN's entry - once every 3 months! (They call it 'quarterly' - I call it 'not often enough!'). Can you imagine seeing a program printed in the

January issue of the magazine and having to wait until March to get the program from the disk? The cause of this 'once-every-3-months' disk output is that the magazine is now catering to several other makes of computers and diluting the Commodore input. This same magazine also puts out disks for ATARI, APPLE and IBM programs it prints in its magazine. I found that by checking a year's worth of the disks, each one has an average of 200 blocks free. Again, as was the case with RE-RUN, all of the programs on the disks that I used were bug-free. Conclusion: Even at the seemingly low price of \$39.95 a year (remember, only 4 disks a year), it is not worth it due to the 3 month wait between disks.

3. COMPUTE!'s GAZETTE DISK

This disk, called just what it is - COMPUTE!'s GAZETTE disk - is one that I prefer over the previous two mainly because it is produced EVERY month. The cost of this one is \$69.95 for a year - no small amount - but still within the price range for magazine disks. Conclusion: I recommend this one as my 2nd choice, based on whether you subscribe to the magazine or not. I feel it would be a waste of money to subscribe to a disk and not the magazine behind the disk.

4. LOADSTAR

The Loadstar disk is produced by COMMODORE magazine and is by far the best of the lot! (in my opinion). It is

more a magazine-on-disk rather than just a disk full of programs from the magazine. There is a 'Question and Answer' section, a 'Hints and Tips' section, a 'Tutorial' section, and lots more to grab and hold your interest. There is even background music while you view the menu (you can control whether it plays or not). Just exploring the disk when it arrives can occupy hours of my time. And talk about using space on a disk - WOW! They ALWAYS use both sides of the disk and of the total of 1300 blocks, will only have at most 270 blocks free, and sometimes as little as 24 blocks free! A couple of times, in the last few months, the LOADSTAR disk has consisted of '3' sides (two disks!). So speaking quantity-wise, this is the winner by far. Conclusion: I would imagine that you have gathered by now that LoadStar is my favorite. It is priced at \$69.95 and this time I will really show my bias and say 'It's worth it!' All of these disks use up their share of the blocks with ads. This I accept and is to be expected. After all, they are in the business to make money. Some of the ads are rather clever, especially on the Compute! and Compute!'s Gazette disks. Each of the disks has excellent presentations. The menus are very colorful and easy to use. There is one thing about the LoadStar disk that is different. When you call up a program from its menu and run it, you can (usually) return to the menu. Not so with the others. With them you have to reload the menu and start again. This is annoying. I have

spoken a lot about the quantity of programs on all these disks rather than the quality of the programs. It stands to reason that the quality of a disks' programs is directly related to the quality of the magazine.

I might offer a suggestion: What I have done to keep the cost down on these magazine disk subscriptions is find three friends who also subscribe to the same magazines and then split the cost of the disk subscriptions. The total cost of a years subscription to all 4 disks mentioned above amounts to \$269.82. A tidy sum - but if you divide this cost by 4 you are talking about \$67.45. Remember, this is for FOUR different magazine disk for a year! If this is too rich for your budget, consider a 4 way split of the cost of, say LoadStar - \$17.49. As for the AHOY! magazine disk I can only say I've seen a few of them and it seems to be on a par with the others. It too has a colorful, clever way of presenting its menu. They do seem to have the same failing as most of the others - a lot of wasted space. I don't subscribe to the magazine or the disk so I really can't offer an opinion or give a conclusion.

I hope this review will help you and not confuse you in determining if you're interested in subscribing to any or all of these magazine disks. It is an expense but sure saves a lot of typing.

HEB News

The November meeting of the HEB Chapter will be geared to the coming

Christmas holidays. Laura Clements will show us all how to make Christmas cards and decorations with Print Shop. We will also have a section set up for "Gently run programs and equipment." This Garage Sale section will be for all equipment and programs (ORIGINALS ONLY preferably with documentation) and other computer paraphernalia you may want to sell. Please have each item clearly marked. We will also have several members bringing their personal equipment and setting up along the perimeter of the room in order to answer questions. Bring your computers and a favorite program to share with others on a one to one basis. Come and help the officers of the HEB Chapter make this a great meeting.

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Escape Codes and much more...**ESPECIALLY FOR THE C-128****Ralph Edwards****Fresno CUG**

One of the many features of the 128 is the use of the ESCape key in the upper lefthand corner of the keyboard. This key has many uses in the 128 mode of operation. Listed below are the codes and what each will do. Each code is enabled by pressing the ESCape key and then the key listed. You don't press them at the same time; just press the ESCape key and then the key you want.

Q - Erase to the end of the current line. This will erase anything on the current line you have the cursor on to the end of that line.

P - Erase from the cursor to the beginning of the line the cursor is presently on.

' - Erase from the cursor to the bottom of the screen.

J - Move the cursor to the start of the line the cursor is on.

K - Move the cursor to the end of the line the cursor is on.

A - Enable Auto-insert. Everything you type will be displayed and the text on the current line will be moved over to make room for what you have added.

C - Disables the Auto-Insert mode.

D - Deletes the line the cursor is on.

I - Inserts a blank line where the cursor is and move all following text down one line.

Y - Use default tab settings. The default setting is 8 spaces jumped per TAB key press.

Z - Clear all tabs. If TAB key is pressed after an ESC Z has been performed, the cursor will jump to the end of the line it is on.

L - Enables scrolling of screen.

M - Disables screen scrolling.

V - Scrolls the screen up one line each time the ESC V combination is pressed.

W - Scrolls the screen down one line each time the keys are pressed.

E - Sets the cursor to a solid block with no blinking.

F - Sets the cursor to a solid block and blink.

X - Swap the 40/80 display; after the ESC

X combination is pressed, the cursor will go to the other screen (40 vs. 80 column).

T - Sets the UPPER LEFT corner of a window - used to set a window for viewing on a screen.

B - Sets the LOWER RIGHT corner of a window.

These ESC codes work only in the 80 column mode:

U - Changes the block cursor to an underline.

S - Changes the cursor back to a block.

R - Reverses the screen. Instead of white letters on a black background, puts black letters on a white background.

N - Puts the screen back to normal.

FOUR TIPS FOR THE C-128

COM-LINE, Chula Vista, CA

C-128 Monitor Printouts: The built-in monitor is a great help to those who dabble in machine language, but it lacks any commands to redirect its output to the printer. Here is a foolproof procedure. In direct mode enter:

OPEN4.4:CMD4:MONITOR

When you press RETURN, you will be in the monitor, and all output will go to the printer. To discontinue printing, just enter X and press RETURN. You'll

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instantly go back to BASIC, with the printer completely off-line. By George Gilbert.

C-128 Monitor and Resets: It doesn't say so in the manual, but when resetting the C-128, you can go directly to the monitor simply by holding down the RUN/STOP key as you press the reset button. You can use this if your BASIC program crashes in a seemingly unrecoverable way. To recover harmlessly from the crash, press RUN/STOP and push the reset button. When the monitor prompt appears, type and X and press RETURN. The machine will return to BASIC with your program still intact. By Anna Mae Hertzler.

Pausing C-128 Graphics: It's sometimes desirable to pause the creation of a high resolution graphics in mid-program,

especially when developing software. My trick for this is to turn on the trace option (by entering TRON) before running the program. With this option enabled, you can pause the creation of the high res screen simply by pressing the NO SCROLL key. By J. C. Bollmer.

From COM-VIC, Montreal, Canada
C-128 Merge Command: First, create an ASCII listing of the program you wish to merge (Merge1)

```
OPEN8,8,8,'MERGE1.ASC,S,W':CMD8:LIST
PRINT#8:CLOSE8
```

Next, load the main program and enter the following:

```
OPEN8,8,8,'MERGE1.ASC':
BANK15:SYS65478,0,8
Ignore Syntax Error and enter CLOSE 8.
```

Ft. Worth News

For our November meeting, Bob Krause will show us how to use graphics on the C64. Bob has put some very good pictures on the Graphics BBS and now he will share his expertise with us.

We will have the election of next year's chapter officers so be sure to attend and vote for the candidates of your choice.

The meeting will be Saturday, Nov. 14, 1:30 p.m., at General Dynamics Recreation Area on Bryant-Irvin Road.

AMIGA News

Rick Schulz

In a previous Amiga Chapter news column, members were encouraged to purchase raffle tickets at the MidCities Computer Conference. Those of you who did, have since had your money refunded. We were informed that Texas state law forbids raffles and other games of chance, even when sponsored by a not-for-profit organization like the MCCC. Not wishing to spend our days breaking large rocks into small ones, your officers immediately cancelled plans to hold a raffle, refunded any monies donated, and gave the door prizes away to those attending

the convention. Your officers apologize for any confusion this may have caused.

As detailed elsewhere in this issue, there will be two Amiga chapter meetings in November. The H-E-B meeting will (this month only) have a different topic and speaker than the Arlington meeting. Jack Smith will give a talk on the care and feeding of your new Amiga. The program will be primarily geared for new Amiga owners.

At the Arlington meeting, Roy Garbett of the Dallas Times Herald will give a speech on "Interfacing Instrumentation to the Amiga". The topics covered include color separations and RGB sensors using products like Digiview and Butcher in the industrial printing environment.

And in December, Scott Lamb will give a presentation entitled "TeleWars" at both chapter meetings.



OWNER'S MANUAL-WHAT'S THAT?

George Pope

Oddly enough that's the little (sometimes BIG) book that comes with the software when you buy it. WHAT is it used for? Yes! You do use it! Usually when you first buy a program, you make a quick check for mundane things like how to load the program, or perhaps what it is supposed to do, or if you are real daring, you look at some of the operating commands.

DO I HAVE NEWS FOR YOU!!!

Many, many computer users, not just Commodore either, never get what they paid for. So what else is news? It isn't always because some DIP has sold a shoddy product, though that does happen all too often. It happens because we YES WE are too lazy. What a horrible thing to say. You can rule yourself out easily by truthfully answering the following question with a YES: If an owner's manual is over 5 pages long, do I routinely go back to it on a regular

Catalina Computer Club

basis to see what I may be missing or perhaps to figure out some advanced handling feature? If YES, you need read no further (Remember - an honest answer!!). If NO, here we go!

IT'S A GOLD MINE !!

Seriously, after using a program for a while, or for that matter a piece of hardware, the familiarity attained makes us confident we know how to use the program. After spending \$20, \$50, or even \$100 we tend to become overconfident and so good we don't need to look at the manual. NOT SO!! It does, however, give us a running start to go back and re-read the manual and find out all kinds of good things that NOW make sense, and VOILA!! the program or machine does more for us, making the job at hand easier. So, in the immortal words of a TV commercial: 'TRY IT - YOU'LL LIKE IT!!'

PD Reviews

T. Flynn

BIGGER WINDOWS

This month I am going to tell you how to make the most use of your screen. You have all seen how much of a border there is between the edges of your windows and the sides of the monitor screen. This has probably seemed like wasted space, especially when you display a document and find out that your eighty column screen will not print eighty characters on one line. In documents with formatted columns or graphics this is particularly annoying. Well, help for the short-screen blues is here.

MOREROWS is a program that allows you to extend the size of your windows. Now your 80 column text will print like it is supposed to. I have my windows set to where you can barely see the corners, giving the largest possible window with visible borders. Of course, you can extend the borders out of sight if you wish, but I like to see my work area.

To use MOREROWS, you need to find the file WIDEWIND.ARC. When unarced you will have two files, MOREROWS and MOREROWS.hlp. MOREROWS needs to be in the current directory or in your C: directory. While the documentation on

this is fair there are a few things I would like to clarify. First, the example given for changing the window size is for a Sony monitor and comes out too large for the Amiga monitor. I have found that MOREROWS - rows 14 - columns 30

works very well for a full size screen. You can change this to whatever suits you. The second point is for those of you who haven't played with Preferences much. When the documentation mentions moving the screen it means to use the mouse pointer to move the right angle figure inside the box in the center of the first preferences window. This will move your window in the monitor's physical screen.

Unfortunately the author of this useful utility is unknown so there is no way to thank him except by making good use of this program. That is no hardship.

While this program is very handy, a fellow named Andry Rachmet didn't like having to expand the window on bootup each time (the original window will only come up in standard Amiga size). So Andry wrote a utility file that took care of that. FULLWINDOW is a program that automatically resizes a window to its

maximum limit.

FULLWINDOW is found in FULLWIND.ARC and contains the working program and a documentation file. By making FULLWINDOW the first command in the startup-sequence file and putting the program in the C: directory, you start out with your oversized window right from bootup.

This file is copyrighted but you are free to use, copy, and give it away. While Andry hints about making a contribution, it is not specified as Shareware.

Another utility that can be used for this purpose is WINSIZE. Using the command 'WINSIZE' by itself gives the same results as FULLWINDOW. However, James Cooper, whose creation this is, has added another function. By specifying the left side, top side, width, and height, you can change the size of your current window. Using this format you may adjust a window's size to larger than its maximum limits but not smaller than its minimum.

For anyone who uses CLI at all these are useful programs for your toolbox. I have installed them on all my general purpose bootable disks and feel very cramped now when I boot up a disk that is not so equipped. Taken together, I would give these utilities a 9.5 just for their usefulness.

PACK-IT

How many times have you started browsing through a PD disk and found a program that really seemed interesting only to find out that to run it you have to move a lot of different files to an empty disk and then create a number of directories for all the different files? I've passed up a few programs that were probably very good ones because I didn't want to go through all that trouble. This month's offering is for the people who develop programs like these. I have found two utilities that can simplify ARCing programs that use many files in different directories.

Pack-it will take an entire disk or specified directories and put them into one file. This file (xxxx.PAK) will be a little larger than the total of its members because it contains data to recreate all directories and sub-directories; however, this can be offset by ARCing the finished file. With just two commands to UNARC the downloaded file and then unPACK that file you have a complete reconstruction of the original disk. The documentation with this program suggests ways of excluding

files that everyone should already have to keep the file size down.

Command Usage:

PACK-IT (c:e) <dev:> <filename>

The first argument (c:e) tells Pack-it whether you are (c)reating a .PAK file or (e)xtracting from one.

If you code (c) than <dev:> is the device(DF0:,RAM:,etc.) that you want the .PAK file written to. If you specify (e) than <dev:> is where you want the unPacked files to go. Use the CD command to point to the original files to Pack(c) or to where the file being unPacked resides(e).

<filename> is the name of the .PAK file being created or extracted. Don't add the .PAK suffix, Pack-it will deal with that.

This helpful piece of code comes to us from Gary Kemper of Glendora, CA. While the Amiga community might not be too quick with cash, it certainly appreciates these utilities which allow us to do so much more with our machines. Please keep up the good work.

TRACKER

Tracker gives basically the same results as Pack-it but works in a different way. Instead of specifying a device or directory, Tracker makes files out of specified tracks on a device. The .doc file suggests limiting these files to 10 tracks each to keep the file size and the ARCing time down. However, anyone using this would probably want to place all the files in one ARCD file which would end up taking just as much time and be just as large as a single file. The choice is yours.

One tip the author gives to keep the file sizes to a minimum is to use a sector map to see just which tracks need to be copied.

Command Usage: (creating files from tracks)

TRACKER read <trk#1> <trk#2>
<filename>

<trk#1> is the first track to read and <trk#2> is the last track to read to a single file.

Like Pack-it, <filename> is the file being created.

Command Usage: (writing files to tracks)

TRACKER write <filename>

Here <filename> is the file you are

extracting the data from.

In both cases, the action being performed is done on DFO. The (read) command takes the data from the disk in the internal drive. The (write) command puts the data on the disk in DFO. Use a complete pathname or the CD command to specify the file being created or read from.

The authorship of this program is not too clear from the documentation. It mentions the names, the Duke of Downloads, Lord Bradford, and Wilson-Bartel Associates. Our thanks to whoever, and we hope to see more from you in the future.

COMPARISONS

I was going to compare the times it took each program to pack and unpack files but since Pack-it did it in one pass and I used four runs with Tracker that wouldn't give an accurate picture. In file size, however, (working with 3 directories, 1 sub-directory, and 8 files) Pack-it resulted in one file of 325K while Tracker had four files totaling 476K. Most of this extra size came from empty sectors on some of the copied tracks. The difference narrowed after ARcing to

235K(Pack-it) and 304K.

Another difference between the two utilities is that Tracker can copy a bootable disk and recreate it. Given all the files though, all it would take for the same result with Pack-it would be to give the new disk an Install command.

One problem that arose with Pack-it was when I tried to create the .PAK file on the same disk I was reading. The program read a few files into the new file and then tried to read the disk or to RAM: gave me no trouble.

While I have to admit a preference for the ease of use I found with Pack-it, there are times that Tracker would be not only favored but necessary. If you made some changes to a KickStart disk and wanted to upload a copy to a friend, Pack-it would not be able to read it since it is not a DOS disk. I won't try to rate these programs because they are for a specialized use which I have no need of yet, but I do offer Kudos to both for the imagination in seeing the need for them and supplying the answer.

WHAT IS A PC-10-2 ?

Doug Davis, CCCC, Inc.

Over two years ago, Commodore introduced its IBM PC XT clone into the European market. The computer caught on and has fared well in that market place. Commodore decided this year to introduce it in the US. It caught on immediately, due to its low price combined with many features that are considered optional on other clones.

This computer has a built-in color graphics (CGA) card, 640K of on-board memory, two built-in 360K floppy disk drives, a Centronics parallel port, an RS-232 port, 5 expansion slots, room inside for an optional hard disk, and comes packaged with MS-DOS 3.2, GW BASIC, and Borland's SIDEKICK. This computer runs at 4.77 MHz, which is the IBM standard speed for the PC and PC XT computers. The Commodore clone will run virtually any software that will run on the IBM itself. The color monitor which is specified for the PC10 is the Commodore 1902, which is the same monitor used on the C128. For those of us who have a C128, this means that you don't necessarily have to go out and buy a monitor as well,

which amounts to about \$250 or more--for a color monitor.

Cost comparisons vary widely between sources of the IBM PC XT, as well as between the various clones themselves. The PC10-2 was made to sell for \$1295 with many more features than the IBM version which was made to sell for \$2295. The actual selling price for the PC10-2 as of July 87 has been under \$700 including shipping [\$639]. A 20 megabyte hard drive brings the price up, but still it's under \$900. The competition is keen on the clone scene, and I don't think we've seen the bottom yet.

Much of the competition is offering other attractions such as additional software packages: word processors, data bases and spreadsheets; higher speed, joy stick ports, etc. Speed and extra ports come from add-on cards which add more cost, which may still be reasonable, depending on the source. Look carefully at what you want in your clone. Be aware that Commodore offers a 1-year warranty, whereas some of the clones offer only 90 days or no warranty. I suspect some of the clone manufacturers may also be offering longer warranties due to the tough competition for this market share.

Additional Chapter Meeting

Rick Schulz

As I mentioned in last month's issue, our Chapter has experienced tremendous growth, and with that growth has come problems of how to accommodate 60-100 people each meeting. As I promised then, your chapter officers have been working on this problem for some time now. The options were simple: (1) form a new chapter; (2) move the meeting to a larger room; (3) hold two meetings a month in different locations; (4) do nothing. The fourth option was considered unacceptable, since the problems would only get worse.

The second option was investigated, but the larger room was not always available at the Arlington Community Center. In any event, the auditorium (the largest room at the community center) is too large for our chapter. We debated the merits of renting two rooms, but concluded that this would not be practical for our members: too often members would be in transit between rooms, making it difficult to conduct club business. Also, one would be faced with missing something in room A to participate in the activities in room B. Also, the additional cost would make this option difficult to justify.

The first option was brought up for discussion last summer, but the response was so poor that we concluded that the chapter is not ready to split into two chapters.

This left the third option. Many of the members live in Fort Worth and in the H-E-B area, and find the 20 mile trip (give or take a few miles) rather long, even if it is only once a month. We decided that in order to best serve the needs of the all the chapter members, and to try to increase the number of new members, a second meeting would be held somewhere in the metroplex.

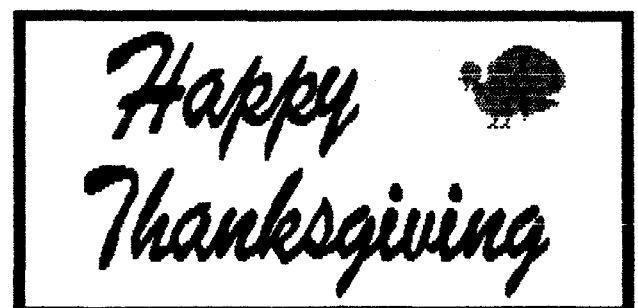
A survey of our membership was made, and we discovered that outside of Arlington, many of our members lived in the Hurst-Euless-Bedford and Fort Worth areas. We began to look for a place to hold our meetings that would be close and convenient for residents of both Fort Worth and H-E-B. We also had to consider where the greatest potential for growth in membership would be. Finally, a site close to Fort Worth and the Hurst -

Euless - Bedford area was found: the North Richland Hills Community Center.

This is a new facility, purchased by the city from a church and converted into a library and community center complex. It is located just east of the Rufe Snow and 820, on the south side of 820. The community center is located just east (behind) the library. The meeting rooms are located on the second floor of the community center (there is even an elevator for those who do not wish to climb stairs).

The meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month, beginning at 7 p.m. and ending at 9 p.m. Members may attend either or both meetings; however, the presentation will be same at both meetings (whenever possible). The chapter librarian will be at both meetings with disks of the month, etc., so that, regardless of which meeting you attend, you will not miss out on anything.

Now I must qualify a statement I made just a moment ago. Not wishing to plan, arrange and present two different programs each month, the chapter officers decided to present the same program at both meetings, except (you knew this was coming, didn't you?) for the first month. Unfortunately, Roy Garbett of the Dallas Times Herald, who will give a speech on "Interfacing Instrumentation to the Amiga" at the meeting on November 19, will not be able to give this presentation on November 9 at the new meeting. Instead, Jack Smith will give a talk on the care and feeding of your new Amiga. The program will be primarily geared for new Amiga owners. We have gained many new members in the past month or two, and Jack has a wealth of information that will be of great interest to all, especially the newer Amiga owners.



NEW VERSION OF RDCBM

Keith Peterson
COMM'PUTOY CULT

Now available from SIMTEL20...

Name : Directory PD:(CPM.C128)
RDCBM20.lbr.1

Type : Binary

Bytes: 17280

CRC : 99EH

This program is a general purpose file copier, which copies from a Commodore DOS format disk to the CP/M disk. It is designed to be faster and more convenient to use than any of the existing CBM->CP/M copiers. It uses burst mode on 1571 drives and can write to the 17xx RAM expander or to a 1571 onto any format disk the drive supports. It does not require you to exit from CP/M to use it, as it is a CP/M transient utility.

Version 2.0 corrects a serious bug in Version 1.0, and as a side benefit is smaller and faster. Version 1.0 stripped a few hundred bytes from the beginning of binary files when copying and also had problems handling files larger than the memory buffer. Version 2.0 corrects both of these problems and has been completely tested on both types of floppy drive and the RAM expander. It properly performs binary and text copies on one drive or two.

Hardware requirements are:

- > A Commodore 128 computer
- > At least one 1541 or 1571 disk drive (1571 recommended)
- > Optional but recommended 1700 or 1750 RAM expansion

The program is set up to operate with two drives, and in fact, this decreased the code size substantially. However, it works reasonably well with one floppy if you select drive E as the second drive.

MS - DOS

Walter Watts, Sr.
CCCC, Tucson, AZ

This month I am going to break away from the general help page and do a review of a shareware piece of software for the MS-DOS machines called AS EASY AS. It is a spreadsheet program that is a lot like Lotus 123 ver 1a. But it does not have the price tag that Lotus 123 has: Lotus 123 - \$350 ; AS EASY AS - \$30.

I use spreadsheet programs at work quite extensively (mainly Lotus 123 and Symphony); therefore, I had my eyes peeled for any spreadsheet program that did not have the price tag of either of these two. When a friend of mine told me about AS EASY AS, I just had to try it. What I found was what appeared to be an identical twin of Lotus 123 ver 1a. Once I had downloaded it from a local bulletin board, I started to run it through its paces.

You can load the file one of two ways, either with pop down menus or with the heading type used on Lotus 123. I chose the 123 ver. for obvious reasons. It sure looked like 123. Most of the commands were the same, though some have changed: 'print' is now 'printit', and a few others are different. But outside of a few cosmetic types of differences, they are really identical. What I really needed to find out was what file extension it used when saving or reading a file. Lotus 123 uses two: .wks and .wkl. (whether you are using ver 1a or 2.0) What I did was type in a short spreadsheet and save it (the same way as 123). When I looked at the file extension on the file, it read .wks. The same as Lotus 123 ver 1a. Could it really read Lotus 123 spreadsheets? Well, when in doubt, try it. I loaded one of the spreadsheets I had from both versions of Lotus 123 and sure enough, they loaded right in with no problem at all! I played with the files for a while, making changes and resaving a couple times, and then proceeded to the ultimate test. Can Lotus 123 read files created on AS EASY AS? I loaded Lotus 123 and then tried retrieving the file I had created with AS EASY AS and sure enough, it loaded in with no problem. Not only are the looks the same, but they will read each other's files. The ultimate in

compatibility!

For those that have not used Lotus 123, it is the standard in the business community for spreadsheets. Not only is it simple to use, (most of it is menu generated) but it also does really complicated operations, like being able to use logarithms, sines, cosines, tangents and a host of others when using formulas. This versatility makes it invaluable to a business when using a 'what if' scenario. I decided to see whether or not AS EASY AS could do the same. It sure did, but I noticed a difference in how it deals with them. I looked more closely at Lotus 123 and found that the ways in which you use them in a formula is different. I tried loading one of my spreadsheet files that had some of these in it into AS EASY AS. As it was loading, the spreadsheet

errored out. It could not understand the formula in the format it was in. I was disappointed, but not completely. I could still do the majority of my work on a spreadsheet at home and be able to finish at work if need be. Quite a time saver and the price was right. Plus, the majority of spreadsheets I create at work require only simple formulas that are compatible with both spreadsheets. I have found the program that will allow me to work at home if need be.

The only problem would be for those who have not used Lotus 123 in that AS EASY AS does not come with instructions as most shareware programs normally do. It does have an online help file, which will answer most of your questions, but to get the full text version, you must register your copy. That won't hurt to bad; the price is low.

Thank You

The conference staff of the Metroplex Computer Conference (sponsored by the Mid-Cities Commodore Computer Club) would like to express appreciation for the following contributions.

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CONDENSED PRINT

Bill O'Neill, CUG, Phoenix

Some people have reported having trouble printing condensed print the full width of the printer. This should not be a problem as long as the program you are using has its margins set wide enough and is capable of sending 120-140 characters per line. If the program is not at fault then the problem may lie with the printer interface. Some interfaces, in trying to emulate the CBM 1525 printer, trap certain printer codes and restrict the print width to 80 characters per line, sending a carriage return and line feed automatically after 80 characters on a line. Check your interface manual to see if this is the source of the problem. If it is, then the problem becomes how to outwit an interface that is too smart for its own good. There are three ways to do this. First - Some interfaces have several different modes of operation, some of which provide conversion of CBM ASCII to true ASCII without trapping printer codes or limiting the number of characters per line (such as the Super Grafix mode on Xetec interfaces). Check your manual, and if such a mode exists, use it.

Second - Some interfaces allow you to change to the print width with a Print Width Command. Check your manual and if such a command exists, use it. The command must generally be sent over the interface command channel (often with a secondary address of 15) and should be sent before running your program. For example, the command for a Xetec interface would be:

```
OPEN4,4,15:PRINT#4,'W'CHR$(n):CLOSE4
```

where n is the new print width limit

Third - Almost all interfaces allow unlimited print width in transparent mode. If the program you are using can supply true ASCII so that no conversion by the interface is necessary, then lock the interface in transparent mode before running the program with:

```
OPEN4,4,24:PRINT#4:CLOSE4
```

If none of these suggestions work, then buy a new interface!!!!

1670 MODEM

**Had Lanham
CCCC, Tucson, AZ**

As most of you know, I recently changed from a 1650 Modem to a 1570 Modem. Now as you know, the 1650 is a real nice Modem. It has all kinds of Switches to turn things off so that people like me won't get into trouble when they are plugged in, but not in use. But the 1670 is a new story. That little Rascal tries to answer all phone calls that come in while you are on your Computer! It sets up such a howl that the only thing you can do is turn your computer off or unplug the Modem before they hang up the phone at the other end. Well, I knew there had to be something I could do, so I went to good old Radio Shack and sure enough, they have a switch called a Ring Controller (#43-127). It plugs in the line and has an on/off switch and a light to tell you when the phone is ringing. When it is turned off, the phone still works OK, but the bell doesn't ring to the modem. Now every thing works fine, and I love it.

New BBS Numbers

ASCII Board:
268-4191

Graphics Board:
268-4196

VIZASTAR

Random Bits Arlington, VA

VIZASTAR is an integrated package consisting of a spreadsheet, a database, and graphics. Information can be transferred to or from any of these three areas without having to first write a sequential file.

It is a powerful program, which operates much like Lotus 1-2-3 for those of you familiar with the PC compatible or IBM world. I really like the idea of having the commands listed at the top of the screen so that you don't have to memorize them. The program comes with a cartridge and a disk, and you need both to use it. The XL8 version offers more memory than the XL4 and provides more graphics capability. Cost is about \$80 through mail order for the XL8.

The spreadsheet allow 64 columns and 1000 rows. The only limitations is the disk space. You can section any part of the screen into a maximum of 9 windows. Whenever you save a worksheet, all settings such as windows, cursor position, menu choices screen colors, and printer options are saved along with the worksheet.

The database allows 15 files per database. Each file can have as many as 9 screen layouts, but only one key. These files can have their contents 'exported' as a standard sequential file for use with other programs such as VIZAWRITE or EASY SCRIPT word processors. You can also 'import' sequential files into VIZASTAR from other database systems or your own BASIC files.

You can define comprehensive formulas in both the spreadsheet cells and database fields. Criteria for searching can be set up for both the database and the spreadsheet.

Command automation can be set up for any of the three areas. This is especially useful if you have to repeat a sequence of commands to accomplish your task and want to speed up the time it takes to do the task.

VIZASTAR abounds with sophisticated printing capability. Reports can be laid out in any form you can imagine. You are able to print from different parts of the worksheet and have VIZASTAR automatically print headings and footings with each page numbered. The print command always knows where

you are on the printed page, so pages can be built up from different parts of the sheet. You don't have to be concerned about line or page endings.

It does take a while to master the capabilities of VIZASTAR. However, you can learn as you go, and you don't have to know a lot to get started. The manual is well-written and very extensive. I use VIZASTAR in my business and highly recommend it to anyone who needs to do serious work.

Test Drive

Review by Cheryl Howard

At one time or another in our lives, most of us have dreamed of being rich, owning a large fancy home or even a castle in a far-away romantic land and having a multitude of servants. We would naturally own a magnificent expensive sports car such as a Ferrari, Porsche 911 or even a Lamborghini.

Now thanks to Accolade Software, at least part of our fantasy can come true with the help of the Commodore 64/128. TEST DRIVE gives even the poorest dreamer the chance to drive five of the world's most exotic cars.

Fasten your seat belt as you get behind the wheel of five exceptional automobiles in a driving simulation that according to Accolade is guaranteed to ignite your adrenaline.

The simulation begins with an impressive introductory screen including a voice announcement and the usual credits. You are shown a side view of each of the five cars, one at a time complete with "Spec charts". Scroll through each separate page with the joystick and pick the car you want to drive. You will now find yourself inside, behind the wheel, ready to take on the world.

The graphics, sound and animation are the best I have seen on a 64 program in a long time. With a few keystrokes at the beginning of the test drive, you can have gear shift display along with your dashboard display which includes a radar detector. The gear shift actually moves as you shift. The dials on the dashboard as well as the steering wheel also respond to the actions you make.

All in all, the program is well worth the \$23.95 price tag.

Key Code Values

By Bill Heim
Pasadena CCC

The question this time is what are 'KEYCODE VALUES'? You can read your Programmer's Reference Guide from cover to cover and find very little on these 65 very useful values.

First of all, where are these values stored in your computer? KEYCODE is present at location 197 in memory and is a constantly changing value if you are using the computer keyboard.

What the value represents is a code number for the key being pressed on the keyboard, and the value for that key remains only for the time the key is pressed. When NO KEY is pressed, the value is 64.

Now that we have the where and what of the KEYCODE VALUES, type in and run this little program to see these values.

```
1 PRINT CHR$(147)
4 FOR I = 0 TO 50:NEXT I
5 PRINT PEEK(197),
10 K = PEEK(197):IF K = 64 THEN 10
15 IF K = Y THEN 10
20 PRINT K;Y = K
30 GOTO 10
```

If you have entered the program and have it running, you should see the number 64 displayed in the upper left of your screen. The KEYCODE 64 = NO KEY pressed, which is true since we are looking at the display screen. Start by pressing the 'A' key on your keyboard and work through the alphabet, the numbers, and the rest of the keys. You should notice that the values are unique for almost every key pressed. The 'A' key should display a 10. A shifted 'A' will also display a 10, as will Commodore + A or CONTROL + A. The only key on the keyboard that does not have a KEYCODE VALUE is the RESTORE key.

How can we use this new-found set of keycode values? In your BASIC program, you can set a variable to the PEEK of location 197. You can then test the variable with IF...THEN statements to verify which key has been pressed and branch accordingly. To cause the program to wait until a key is pressed, your test is for the value 64, and you branch back to the PEEK(197) as in line 10 of the program above.

Why should you use the keycode values when we can do the same thing with the GET statement? The main reason is that it is faster than GET: a value is obtained rather than a character, and it does not become corrupted by the casing keys (SHIFT, COMMODORE and CONTROL). This value is set with every IRQ interrupt, which is about every 1/60th of a second. With the GET statement, you are required to use a string variable, while the keycode value can be an integer, floating point, or string. The keyboard is looked at as an input matrix of 65 unique possibilities. A PEEK statement is less complex than the GET statement since no conversions are required.

Where can you find a listing of these great keycode values? Not in your P.R.G., but a few of the programming books do have a table of keycode values. Here comes the challenge: write yourself a short program to display the key pressed and its corresponding keycode value; then sort them by value on the screen and possibly dump them to your printer. This would be an excellent way to learn more about the keycode values, and it will be handy if you forget what they are.

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ARLINGTON

News

My apologies to the Arlington Chapter for unintentionally omitting their news from the last issue. The article was sent to me by mail and I carelessly allowed it to get misplaced. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused our members.-Barbara Cramer

As a reminder, we meet the third Tuesday of each month at the Arlington Community Center starting at 6:30 pm for socializing and coordinating with the librarian for copies of programs in our library. At 7:00 there is a brief business meeting with the rest of the evening devoted to interesting programs and training or learning sessions followed by a question and answer period.-Janet Hamm

Can you name these familiar faces?



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November Calendar of Events

Nov. 7 Executive Board Mtg., 10:00 am
Western Hills Inn, Euless

Nov. 9 *AMIGA Chapter, 7:00 pm*
NRJL Community Center

Nov. 14 *Ft. Worth Chapter 1:30 pm*
Gen. Dyn. Rec. Area, Room 2

Grand Prairie Chapter, 1:30 pm
Grand Prairie Public Library

Nov. 17 *Arlington Chapter, 6:30 pm*
Arlington Community Center

Nov. 19 *AMIGA Chapter Mtg., 7:30 pm*
Arlington Community Center

Nov. 21 *HEB Chapter Meeting, 1:30 pm*
Hurst Civic Ctr., 700 Mary Dr.

Nov. 23 *Ft Worth Night Chapter, 6:30 pm*
St. Elisabeth Epis. Church

Dec. 5 Executive Board Mtg., 10:00 am
Western Hills Inn, Euless

The Third Annual MCCC

CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

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MCCC NEWS

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